

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, VE

SUBJECT: MOVIMIENTO ELECTORAL DEL PUEBLO'S (MEP) TRADE UNION
STRENGTH DECLINING RAPIDLY

SUMMARY: THE MEP SUFFERED MAJOR REVERSALS IN UNION ELECTIONS AND THE DEFECTION OF IMPORTANT LEADERS, BRINING INTO QUESTION ITS CONTINUED EXISTENCE AS A VIABLE FORCE WITHIN THE CONFEDERATION OF VENEZUELAN WORKERS (CTV). END SUMMARY.

1. ON DECEMBER 14 EX-PRESIDENT OF THE CTV, JOSE GONZALEZ NAVARRO, REGISTERED AS A MEMBER OF ACCION DEMOCRATICA (AD), THUS FORMALLY BREAKING HIS TIES WITH MEP. GONZALEZ NAVARRO'S DECISION TO REJOIN AD CULMINATES A MONT OF REVERSES FOR MEP IN THE CTV, AN ORGANIZATION IT ONCE DOMINATED. EARLIER IN DECEMBER THE MEP CANDIDATES AT THE CONVENTION OF THE CARACAS AREA LABOR CENTRAL (FUT) RECEIVED ONLY 59 OF THE 528 DELEGATE VOTES CAST FOR THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. IN LATE NOVEMBER THE MEP SLATE RECEIVED ONLY 76 OF THE 3,018 VOTES CAST IN THE ELECTIONS HELD BY THE SIDOR STEEL MILL MOCAL IN CIUDAD GUAYANA. IN MID-NOVEMBER JOSE MOLLEGAS, PRESIDENT OF THE METAL WORKERS FEDERATION (FETROMETAL) AND OVER FITY OF HIS FOLLOWERS REJOINED AD AFTER HAVING DESERTED MEP AT AN EARLIER DATE.

2. COMMENT: THE DECLINE OF MEP IN THE CTV REFLECTS A DELAYED REACTION TO THE PARTY'S HUMILIATING DEFEAT IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS A YEAR AGO. MEP WILL BE HARD PRESSED TO RETAIN A POSITION ON THE
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CTV EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT THE APRIL 1975 CONGRESS IF THE CURRENT

SAVE OF LOSSES AND DEFECTIONS CONTINUES. AD'S GROWING CONFIDENCE ABOUT THE EVENTUAL DISAPPEARANCE OF MPE IS REFLECTED IN REPORTS THAT FETROMETAL'S MOLLEGAS WAS TOLD THAT HE WOULD ONLY BE WELCOME BACK INTO THE AD FOLD IF HE COULD BRING HIS PEOPLE WITH HIM. HE MET WITH AD'S CONDITIONS. REMAINING MEP LEADERS IN THE CTV, SUCH AS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER MAXIMO ACUNA AND PETROLEUM WORKERS (FEDEPETROL) PRESIDENT CARLOS PINERUA, ARE FACING INCREASING PRESSURE TO REJOIN AD AND END THE SCHISM BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES WHICH DATES FROM DECEMBER 1967. THE QUESTION MAY NO LONGER BE "WHETHER," , BUT RATHER "WHEN?".
MCCLINTOCK

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